FBIS DAILY REPORT

MIDDLE EAST & SOUTH ASIA REVIEW

26 FEBRUARY 1987

Lebanon

Syrian commander Brigadier General Ghazi Kan'an repeated to AFP that there are no plans for his troops to take control of Beirut's Shi'ite southern suburb. Gen Kan'an regretted the deaths of some 23 Hizballah members in the Al-Bastah area, but again stressed that armed militiamen will not be allowed to roam the streets. In his address at the mass funeral, Hizballah leader Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah demanded that those responsible for the deaths be brought to trial and warned against a recurrence of such action in the name of the security plan, Voice of Lebanon radio reported. According to the clandestine Radio Free Lebanon, the Fathallah Martyrs Forces threatened Prime Minister Rashid Karami and others seen as responsible for the Syrians' presence with "grave consequences." The self-proclaimed Lebanese Liberation Organization claimed responsibility for a car-bomb explosion aimed at the Syrian headquarters in the Al-Rasul Mosque area, the clandestine revealed. A number of Syrian soldiers were killed, and 17 civilians were wounded, the radio said.

In other reaction against the Syrian presence, Yasir 'Arafat warned of the "dangerous possibilities" of the Syrian deployment around the Palestinian camps and deplored the troops' "criminal actions," Baghdad Voice of the PLO reported. A PLO statement carried by the same radio termed 25 February "the day of bodies" in Beirut, noting that 19 corpses of "Palestinians and Lebanese citizens" were collected from the streets.

The security situation improved when gunmen withdrew as the Lebanese Army took up positions along Beirut contact lines, Beirut radio announced. The Education Ministry directed all goverment schools in West Beirut to reopen 26 February, according to Damascus radio.

Iran-Iraq War

Iranian forces achieved "outstanding victories" in a "two-pronged thrust" against enemy positions east of Basra and north of the Shalamcheh-Basra road, IRNA announced. According to a military statement cited by the agency, the Iraqis suffered 2,000 casualties and were unsuccessful in their attempts to mount a counterattack. A communique reported by IRNA noted that Iranian warplanes "heavily bombed" military targets near Basra. An Iraqi communique carried by Voice of the Masses radio said that Iraqi soldiers wiped out "large groups" of enemy soldiers in the III Army Corps sector and accused Iran of shelling residential areas of Basra.

In remarks cited by IRNA, Majlis Speaker 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani praised the preparedness of Iran's missile units and declared that Iran has the capability to "put Baghdad under pressure and deprive it of security."

DRA

PDPA Secretary General Najibullah invited opposition groups to discuss "specific proposals" for a "government of national unity," in a statement broadcast by Kabul radio. Najibullah stressed that the DRA's policy of reconciliation has "opened the door to everyone" and will not be "influenced by provocations." Referring to the convening of the seventh round of talks between Afghanistan and Pakistan in Geneva, Najibullah declared his optimism that "important questions" may be resolved.

The opposition Islamic Alliance meeting in Peshawar, Pakistan, issued a 4-point resolution promising "safe and secure treatment" for supporters of the Kabul regime who lay down the arms when the Soviet troops withdraw, AFP reported. The alliance also promised that all Afghans would be able to participate in electing an "Islamic government."

Israel

In remarks broadcast by Jerusalem radio, Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir declared that his 9-day visit to the United States was "marked by an incredibly friendly atmosphere" and that "unanimity" characterized his official talks in Washington during which friendship and cooperation were further strenthened. Referring to Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres' visit to Egypt, Shamir reiterated that Peres has no authority to commit Israel on the subject of an international conference on the Mideast.

Egypt

President Husni Mubarak received Israeli Foreign Minister Shim'on Peres for talks 26 February, MENA reported. The Israeli foreign minister was also received by Prime Minister 'Atif Sidqi. According to the agency, the previous day's discussions between Foreign Minister 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid and his Israeli counterpart focused on bilateral relations and ways to promote the Mideast peace process, including the issue of an international conference.

Officials from the Soviet UN Association ended an 8-day visit during which they met with Butrus Ghali, minister of state for foreign affairs, and their Egyptian counterparts, MENA reported. According to TASS, the two UN associations issued a communique calling for an international Mideast conference with the participation of the PLO. During a stopover in Cairo, Suleyman Tatliyev, deputy chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, told MENA that his country is satisfied with the "positive progress" in Soviet-Egyptian relations.

Sudan

Idris al-Banna, deputy chairman of the State Council, called for the Soviet Union to mediate an end to the conflict in the south, SUNA reported. Al-Banna made his request at a predeparture press conference by Suleyman Tatliyev, deputy chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium and head of a Soviet parliamentary delegation. In remarks cited by the agency, Tatliyev declared that his delegation's 10-day visit had contributed to the normalization of bilateral relations. He added that a group of Soviet officials are in Sudan to discuss "rehabilitating and modernizing" various Soviet-aided projects.

Libya

People's Congress — The 12th Ordinary Session of the General People's Congress opened in Sabha, JANA reported. Items on the agenda include reports on various public sectors, as well as consideration of the budget and the court system. During its discussions on foreign policy, the congress will take up the U.S. presence in the Mediterranean and its effect on Libya's relations with other countries, especially Italy, the agency noted.

Bombing in Chad — According to Ndjamena radio, Libyan warplanes carried out "savage and blind air raids" on Feda 24 February.

FBIS **DAILY REPORT**

CONTENTS

South Asia

Vol VIII No 038 *26 February 1987*

MIDDLE EAST & SOUTH ASIA REVIEW i

AFGHANISTAN

Najibullah Speech on Geneva Talks, Reconciliation ..... C 1
Wakil: DRA Ready for Constructive Talks in Geneva ..... C 2
UN Mediator Sees Accord as Catalyst for DRA Unity *[AFP]* ..... C 2
Mujahidin Announce Policy After Soviet Withdrawal *[AFP]* ..... C 2
Red Cross To Start Visiting POWs 4 March *[AFP]* ..... C 3

INDIA

Reportage on Recent Visits of Iranian Officials ..... E 1
Velayati Meets Industry Minister *[IRNA]* ..... E 1
Velayati Praises Ties; Departs *[IRNA]* ..... E 1
Agreement on Goods Exchanges ..... E 1
'Letter of Understanding' *[IRNA]* ..... E 1
Larijani Departs for Islamabad *[IRNA]* ..... E 2
Gandhi, Opposition Leaders Discuss Punjab Plan ..... E 2
Gandhi Asks New Akali Party To Clarify Policies ..... E 2
Barnala Criticizes Rival Akali Dal Convention ..... E 2
Delhi Strike 23 Feb Protests Punjab Terrorism ..... E 3
Government Intervention Demanded ..... E 3
3 Killed in Terrorist Incidents in Punjab ..... E 3
Commission Issues Report on Indira Assassination ..... E 3

OTHER COUNTRIES

SRI LANKA

Jayewardene To Visit Maldives 2-3 March ..... S 1
Foreign Minister Summons Indian Envoy Over Speech ..... S 1
Soviet Delegate Says Relations Growing Stronger ..... S 1

IRAN

Velayati Briefs Cabinet on Syrian Visit ..... I 1
Foreign Minister, IRGC Commander Visit Syria *[cross-reference]* ..... I 1
Majlis Speaker: Baghdad Can Be Deprived of Security ..... I 1
Majlis Deputy From Qom Interviewed on USSR Talks *[KEYHAN 18 Feb]* ..... I 1
Bulgarian Official Discusses Ties With Velayati ..... I 3
Meets With Manauri ..... I 3
Received by Agriculture Minister ..... I 3
Reportage on Combat Operations in War With Iraq ..... I 4
Iraqi Positions Near Basra Hit ..... I 4
Communique No 2,758 ..... I 4
Umm Qasr Shelled 24-25 Feb ..... I 4
Forces Advance in 'Blitz' Attack ..... I 4
Iraqi Brigades Suffer Heavy Losses ..... I 4
More on Iraqis 'Annihilation' ..... I 5
2,000 Iraqis Killed ..... I 5

Iraqi Counterattacks Crushed 1 5
50 Iraqi Tanks Destroyed 1 5
Iraqi Brigade 98 'Smashed' 1 5
Communique on Iraqi Losses, CW Use 1 5

Najibullah Speech on Geneva Talks, Reconciliation
LD252019 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 25 Feb 87

[Radio and television "statement" by Najibullah, general secretary of the PDPA Central Committee on 25 February; place not specified — recorded]

[Text] Dear compatriots, today a routine session of the seventh round of talks between Afghanistan and Pakistan on the political solution of the situation around Afghanistan begins in Geneva. The difference between this round of talks and previous rounds is that it is taking place at a time when the policy of national reconciliation has been declared by the Afghan authorities and is being seriously implemented. The accomplished measures in this direction have aroused wide international reaction. Of course, various views are being expressed in this respect. The majority perceive, and have placed their hopes on, this reconciliation. Others are trying to sabotage it with all their might.

The reconciliation program provides broad possibilities for all Afghan patriots and representatives of the opposition groups to take a serious and active part in the restoration of peace and security in their ancestral land. In order to achieve accord and compromise, we have opened the doors to everyone. We are ready to discuss specific proposals in connection with the composition of a coalition government with representatives of the opposition groups, in Kabul or in any other neutral country.

I would like to mention here that within the composition of the present government, four ministers from the former regime and 35 non-party members are carrying out duties. Several former members of armed opposition groups are heading district and subdistrict governments. This is a realistic example of the active realization of the policy of reconciliation.

Addressing the opposition groups, I invite them to think about the voice of the people of Afghanistan and not to miss this historical chance of achieving peace in the persecuted ancient land of Afghanistan. The responsibility of the present moment demands from the opposition forces realism and decisive steps toward the solution of questions on which the future destiny of our homeland depends.

We have taken such steps so far. In order to advance talks and readiness for compromise, courage and strength are necessary. Specific social tools are necessary. We hope that we will find such characteristics in the [words indistinct] of peace. The policy of reconciliation will allow Afghan refugees to return to their fatherland.

Today, tens of thousands of refugees have returned to their homes. This on-going return to their homeland fully reflects the timely and humane nature of reconciliation. The homeland warmly and sincerely welcomes them and shares with them shelter, land, water, and bread. The government, by allocating money, foodstuffs, commodities, and basic materials, gives them necessary material assistance. A series of concessions, including a deferment of military service, have been put at the service of or at the disposal of these inhabitants.

We approach the international organizations that have been assisting Afghan refugees abroad, and we invite them to assist refugees in returning to the homeland and to resolutely remove the barriers on this path.

The broad peaceful efforts by our people are bearing fruit. Armed groups are coming over to the side of the revolutionary state. Refugees are returning to their homes. Aid grants have been increased.

I announce with complete responsibility that we are implementing all the pledges we made in the declaration of the Revolutionary Council, with regard to nationwide national reconciliation.

Despite the unilateral ceasefire and the cessation of combat operations on our side, the enemy has continued to fight in some regions of the country and is engaged in terrorist acts. However, we will not be influenced by provocations of the enemies who want to defame and halt reconciliation.

Different aspects of the solution of questions around Afghanistan will be discussed in Geneva. During the previous rounds, certain accords were achieved. However, some important questions have not yet been agreed upon. We are looking forward, with hope and optimism, to the prospects of their solution. We believe that achieving accords which are acceptable to the two sides are (?possible). We are resolutely determined to pursue the matter until the (?speedy) arrival of peace in Afghanistan.

We have introduced significant changes in the revolutionary process and we are trying to make it more acceptable and [words indistinct] in the specific peasantry conditions of our multinational country, which has complex tribal relations.

All Afghans, all progressive forces of the world and our neighbors are awaiting the positive results of negotiations. It is difficult to envisage that the preservation of this bloody and tense region in Central Asia will be in anyone's interest.

Some 140,000 letters addressed to the supreme extraordinary commission for national reconciliation, to social organizations and to the mass media, have been received from representatives of the persecuted people and from those tired of war. A desire for the urgent restoration of peace in the country is reflected in these letters.

We address our compatriots who, due to fate, are living outside the borders of the country, to pay their patriotic duty and to more actively take part in the process of national reconciliation. We refer to all mankind, with goodwill and progressive ideas, and request them to support our sincere and struggling efforts for a cessation of bloodshed in the land of Afghanistan, by arriving at a peaceful political solution of the questions around Afghanistan.

We hope our invitation made today to the opposition groups, concerning the beginning of talks on the formation of a government of national unity, will be heard and supported by those who want to see, as soon as possible, our people prosperous and a blossoming Afghanistan.

Wakil: DRA Ready for Constructive Talks in Geneva

LD252138 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari 1600 GMT 25 Feb 87

[Text] The seventh round of talks between Afghanistan and Pakistan, through the mediation of Diego Cordevez, personal representative of the UN secretary general, resumed today in the Nations Palace in Geneva.

DRA Foreign Minister Comrade Abdol Wakil is heading the Afghan delegation, and Pakistani Foreign Aminister Sahabzada Yaqub Khan is heading the Pakistan delegation at these talks.

DRA Foreign Minister Comrade Abdol Wakil held a press conference in Geneva on Monday and said: The Afghan delegation is ready for constructive talks in order to find a quick political solution to the problems related to Afghanistan. Comrade Abdol Wakil added: We are sure that such a settlement would be in the interests of the people of Afghanistan and of other nations. Comrade Abdol Wakil is heading the DRA delegation at the talks on the question of a political solution of events around Afghanistan which resumed today in Geneva.

The DRA foreign minister added: Afghanistan is pursuing a policy of national reconciliation, which is widely welcomed and is supported inside and outside our country. He said: The objective of the policy of national reconciliation is the restoration of peace in Afghanistan, and the return of all Afghans who are living abroad to the homeland and their involvement in the building of a new life in the country.

The DRA foreign minister stressed: However, reactionary and imperialist forces, on instructions from the United States, are continuing their efforts for creating barriers to the process of national reconciliation.

UN Mediator Sees Accord as Catalyst for DRA Unity

AU251441 Paris AFP in English 1432 GMT 25 Feb 87

[Text] Geneva, Feb 25 (AFP) — An accord between Afghanistan and Pakistan would serve as a "catalyst" for national reconciliation among Afghans and the establishment of a new government in Kabul, U.N. mediator Diego Cordovez said here Wednesday.

Speaking at a news conference before the resumption of U.N.-organised indirect talks between Pakistan and Afghanistan, Mr. Cordovez added however that there could be no international agreement on the government makeup of an independent state. Mr. Cordovez said the Mujahidin Afghan rebel groups had been consulted on the talks and that it was up to Afghans themselves to decide their future.

The mediator said the only remaining obstacle to a normalisation agreement between Kabul and Islamabad was a timetable for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. The Soviet Army entered Afghanistan in December 1979. Pakistani negotiators initially demanded a withdrawal within three months, but have now extended their deadline to a year. The Afghan side at first proposed four years, but has since brought its offer down to two years.

Western diplomats in Islamabad said earlier this week that differences over a timetable could be overcome, but that the talks could be held up by the question of the future of the Soviet-backed Kabul government of Afghan leader Najibullah.

Mr. Cordovez said talks would continue on the basis of a new proposal by the Afghan side. He added that it was a "very difficult problem" but that "considerable progress" had been made since November following his visits to Islamabad, Kabul and Moscow.

The two sides have already agreed on three conditions for normalising relations — a pledge of non-interference, the return of refugees, and the inclusion of international guarantees (to which the United States and the Soviet Union have agreed in principle).

Mujahidin Announce Policy After Soviet Withdrawal

BK251708 Hong Kong AFP in English 1700 GMT 25 Feb 87

[Text] Islamabad, Feb 25 (AFP) — The seven major Afghan guerrilla movements based in Pakistan have promised "safe and secure" treatment to supporters of the Kabul regime who stop fighting when Soviet troops withdraw from Afghanistan, sources close to the guerrillas said Wednesday.

The AL BUNYAN agency, close to the Moslem alliance spokesman Rasul Sayaf, said the seven heads of the coalition met Tuesday in Peshawar, western Pakistan, and adopted a four-point resolution.

They decided that, "In case of unconditional, total and immediate withdrawal of Russian troops," they would guarantee "those elements who renounce hostility against nation and faith" that "their lives and property would be safe and secure." The alliance said "full human rights in light of Islamic law will be guaranteed," the agency reported.

The alliance also "claims for security in the region and in the whole world" and that "will have cordial relations with all the countries," especially those in the region "provided they respect the territorial integrity of Afghanistan." [sentence as received]

The coalition vowed to maintain "the Islamic independent and non-aligned identity" of Afghanistan after the withdrawal of Soviet troops and "reiterates that Afghanistan will not become a military base for any superpower."

Finally, the Moslem opposition to the Soviet-backed regime in Kabul promised to "provide the opportunity for all Afghan citizens to participate in the election of an Islamic government," according to AL BUNYAN.

The resolution is the first formal and complete public acknowledgement of the opposition's stand on a number of issues. It coincides with the opening Wednesday in Geneva of a new round of talks between Pakistan and Afghanistan under the auspices of the United Nations. According to diplomatic sources, it was designed to answer objections raised by the Soviet Union during preliminary talks with Pakistani authorities in Moscow in recent weeks.

Moscow was reportedly worried about possible disorder in Afghanistan, including the killing of its supporters and destruction of strategic facilities, when its troops pull out.

Red Cross To Start Visiting POWs 4 March

AU251231 Paris AFP in English 1227 GMT 25 Feb 87

[Text] Geneva, Feb 25 (AFP) — Representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) will begin visiting Afghan prisons from March 4, the ICRC said here on Wednesday.

The four delegates, who as is usual for the ICRC, are of Swiss nationality, will start at the Pul-i Charki prison in Kabul, and will see inmates alone. They will be accompanied by a doctor.

The announcement of the visits, which follow an agreement between the ICRC and the Afghan authorities, coincided with the opening here of a new round of indirect talks between Afghanistan and Pakistan on the Afghan conflict.

In addition, the ICRC is in the process of setting up a medical centre in Kabul, which will be in operation soon.

From March 15 it will begin an evaluation of the medical and surgical needs of the Afghan population in cooperation with the Afghan Red Crescent organisation.

The ICRC left Afghanistan in 1982 at the decision of the Kabul government.

Reportage on Recent Visits of Iranian Officials

Velayati Meets Industry Minister

LD201624 Tehran IRNA in English 1610 GMT 20 Feb 87

[Text] New Delhi, Feb. 20, IRNA — Visiting Iranian Foreign Minister Ali 'Akbar Velayati conferred with Indian Minister of State for Industrial Affairs Arunachalam here Friday.

In the meeting the Indian minister referred to the historical links between the two countries and said he had discussed bilateral industrial cooperation with the Islamic Republic officials during his visit to Tehran last December. He expressed hope that such cooperation would further expand Tehran-New Delhi relations.

Velayati in response said that since the 1979 Islamic revolution, Iran has sought to turn the bulk of its relations from the West to the Third World countries. The foreign minister said since Iranian industries were dependent on the West during the pre-revolution era, it is easy for the Islamic Republic to maintain relations with the West, but, he noted, Iran is nowadays pursuing a policy of securing its economic needs from the Third World instead.

Velayati Praises Ties; Departs

LD201943 Tehran IRNA in English 1823 GMT 20 Feb 87

[Text] New Delhi, Feb. 20, IRNA — Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati left here Friday for Tehran after signing a letter of understanding at the end of the fourth Iran-India joint economic commission.

India's minister of external affairs N.D. Tiwari who saw off Dr. Velayati and his accompanying delegation from New Delhi international airport said that the signed letter of understanding mirrors the viewpoints of the two countries' leaders in their meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe. He expressed satisfaction with the concluded agreement. Tiwari said that the two sides showed their willingness to expand and strengthen trade, economic, industrial and cultural areas.

In response, Velayati described the expansion of Tehran-New Delhi ties as one of the objectives of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy. He added that Iran as the biggest country in western Asia, and India as the biggest in southern Asia can have cordial relations. Because, he added, the consolidation the bilateral relations is not only to the benefit of the two countries' nations but also contributes to the effective in political balance of the region. Referring to the three past sessions of the joint economic commission, the Iranian foreign minister stated that "this was the most effective and positive joint commission that we have held together."

Velayati pointing to upcoming visit of his Indian counterpart Tiwari to Iran, expressed hope that exchange of views between Iranian and Indian officials would result in expansion of joint cooperation and an aligning of the two countries' outlooks concerning the Nonaligned Movement.

Agreement on Goods Exchanges

BK201640 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 20 Feb 87

[Text] Iran has agreed to buy Indian goods worth half the value of crude oil it supplies to this country. The goods will include both traditional and nontraditional items. This is one of the major decisions taken by the Indo-Iranian joint commission, which met in New Delhi.

According to the agreed minutes of the meeting signed by the external affairs minister, Mr N.D. Tiwari, and his Iranian counterpart, Dr 'Ali Akbar Velayati, today, the agreement has also been reached on some other issues relating to bilateral economic cooperation.

On the long-pending issue of Kudremukh, an Iranian delegation will come to New Delhi for further discussions to reach a settlement which is expected to be finalized by the year end. An Indian delegation will go to Tehran for talks on contracts relating to textile machinery, automotive spare parts, jeeps, machine tools and leather boots. A number of items has been identified for industrial and technical cooperation. India will also train Iranian personnel in the steel sector. In the cultural field, the Iran Government has agreed to help revive the Iran-India Friendship Society in Tehran.

'Letter of Understanding'

LD201749 Tehran IRNA in English 1730 GMT 20 Feb 87

[Text] New Delhi, Feb. 20, IRNA — A letter of understanding was signed by foreign ministers of Iranian and India at the end of the fourth Iran-India Joint Economic Commission (Feb. 19-20).

The letter of understanding stresses on the expansion of Tehran-New Delhi relations with a view to removing problems in the way of the activities of the committees in the industrial, technical and trade and cultural fields.

In the area of trade, it was decided that the Indian Government would dispatch its oil officials to Tehran within the next three weeks for talks and conclusion of agreement on the purchase of oil for 1988. The Islamic Republic of Iran will most likely import Indian goods the equivalent of half that country's oil purchases from Iran.

The letter calls for Iranian and Indian delegations to speed up their banking problems and trade issues with a view to eliminating problems in the area.

Increase in trade cooperation between the two countries and expansion of Tehran-New Delhi joint rural and heavy-industries projects is also envisaged in the letter.

It was agreed in the cultural committee of the commission that exchange of professors, students and information would be expanded.

Larijani Departs for Islamabad

LD201611 Tehran IRNA in English 1605 GMT 20 Feb 87

[Text] New Delhi, Feb. 20, IRNA — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for international and economic affairs Mohammad Javad Larijani left here for Islamabad, Pakistan, Friday.

Prior to his departure, Larijani told reporters that he is visiting Pakistan to follow up talks on regional developments particularly the Afghan issue with Pakistani officials. Larijani said he is to discuss the latest developments of Afghanistan as well as the measures needed to be taken in this respect with Pakistani Minister of Foreign Affairs Sahabzada Yaqab Khan.

Gandhi, Opposition Leaders Discuss Punjab Plan

BK211707 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 21 Feb 87

[Text] The all-party action plan to combat terrorism and religious fanaticism in Punjab will be launched at a public meeting in Chandigarh on the 1st of next month. The meeting will be addressed by national and state-level political leaders.

The implementation of the action plan was discussed at the meeting the prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, had with the opposition leaders in parliament in New Delhi today. It was decided that the home minister, Mr Buta Singh, will implement it with the assistance of a small group. The meeting was a follow-up of the discussion between the opposition leaders and the prime minister on the 16th of this month and the subsequent talks between the opposition leaders and the union home minister on Thursday [19 February] last.

At today's meeting the prime minister urged the opposition leaders to take up the task of mobilizing public opinion from grass-roots level in Punjab. At the outset Mr Rajiv Gandhi, on behalf of all those present at the meeting, congratulated the Punjab chief minister, Mr Barnala, for the success of yesterday's Sikh convention at Longowal.

The Akali Dal-Longowal group leader in the Lok Sabha, Mr Balwant Singh Ramoowalia, said the largely attended convention has demonstrated the dedication of the people of Punjab to the unity of the country and their opposition to terrorism. Mr Sharminder Singh of the Akali Dal-Badal group said the unified Akali Dal stands for unity and integrity and is opposed to terrorism. The prime minister said if this is the position of the unified Akali Dal the government would very much like them to clarify the position.

The action plan circulated today envisages joint public meetings at selected places in Punjab to be addressed by national- and state-level leaders. After the Chandigarh meeting the second meeting will be in Ferozepore on the martyrdom day of Shaheed Bhagat Singh on the 23d of next month and then in Amritsar on the Jalianwala Bagh day on 4 April.

The objective of the action plan is to combat the ongoing propaganda in Punjab on communal and religious lines and to put an end to the misuse of places of worship for political purposes.

Besides the prime minister, the home minister, the external affairs minister, the commerce minister, and the parliamentary minister were present at the meeting. Those parliamentary parties and groups which attended the meeting included CPI-M, CPI, AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam], Telugu Desam, BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], Lok Dal, Forward Block, National Conference, and RSP [Revolutionary Socialist Party].

The acting head priest of the Akal Takht, Professor Darshan Singh, today denied that he had offered to mediate between the central government and the extremist organizations. This was reported by PTI from Amritsar.

Gandhi Asks New Akali Party To Clarify Policies

BK220353 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 22 Feb 87

[Excerpts] The prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, has asked the Unified Akali Dal [the new Akali party set up by breakaway Akali Dal groups at the behest of the Sikh head priests] to clarify its position on terrorism and unity and integrity of the country. He said the party could use television for the purpose. Mr Gandhi made the offer at his meeting with the opposition leaders called to work out an all-party action plan on the Punjab crisis. The prime minister urged the opposition leaders to mobilize public opinion at the grass-roots level in Punjab. [passage omitted]

The Punjab chief minister, Mr Barnala, has described the delegate session summoned by some persons in Amritsar today as illegal and unconstitutional. In a statement in Chandigarh today, he said that those who have convened this session have either been expelled from the party or have already joined some other political party.

Barnala Criticizes Rival Akali Dal Convention

BK221250 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 22 Feb 87

[Text] In Punjab, the president of the ruling Longowal Akali Dal, Mr Surjit Singh Barnala, has described a delegates session called by some party rebels in Amritsar as illegal and unconstitutional.

Talking to newsmen in Chandigarh today, Mr Barnala said it is merely a gathering of people belonging to either the Baba or Badal factions of the party. Mr Barnala said that Mr Harbans Singh Ghuman, who presided over the Amritsar session, had recently been expelled from the party.

In reply to a question, Mr Barnala said the number of genuine party delegates who attended today's meeting in Amritsar could not be more than 20.

Meanwhile, reports from Amritsar say that the delegates session of the Longowal Akali Dal convened by some dissidents today decided upon what it called the expulsion of Mr Barnala from the presidentship of the party. The session elected Mr Harbans Singh Ghuman as president.

Delhi Strike 23 Feb Protests Punjab Terrorism

BK230850 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] In Delhi, shops and business establishments are closed today in response to a call by the Bharatiya Janata Party for a rally to protest against terrorism in Punjab and infiltration into the country from Bangladesh and Pakistan. Schools, colleges and bus services are however exempted from the strike. The rally is being held at the Boat Club.

Government Intervention Demanded

BK231403 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] The Bharatiya Janata Party held a rally in Delhi today to protest against terrorism in Punjab and infiltration from across the border. The speakers urged the center to intervene and take over direct responsibility for law and order in Punjab. The speakers included the party president, Mr L.K. Advani, and Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee. Earlier, they submitted a memorandum to the president reiterating their demand.

3 Killed in Terrorist Incidents in Punjab

BK210304 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0240 GMT 21 Feb 87

[Text] In Punjab, three persons were shot dead and a few others injured in five separate incidents of terrorist activities in Hoshiarpur and Jullundur Districts last evening. In Hoshiarpur District, a suspected terrorist shot dead a CPI-M activist near (Gadliwala) and a laborer near (Chhuibasi) last night. In Jullundur, a person was shot dead in the cantonement are by a gunman while the victim was getting into his car.

Commission Issues Report on Indira Assassination

BK231627 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1530 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] The Justice Ranganath Mishra Commission has concluded that the violence in Delhi that followed Mrs Indira Gandhi's assassination was not an organized one. The report of the commission along with the action taken by the government on its recommendations was laid in both houses of Parliament today.

The commission observed that the riots in Delhi at the initial stage were spontaneous and by way of reaction to the situation which later developed into a set type. The change in the pattern was the outcome of the takeover of the command of the situation by antisocial elements. The commission also observed that it is difficult to accept the stand that the Congress-I Party had either organized or participated as such in the riots. Such participation was not on a party basis. But it seems to be a fact that a number of people belonging to the Congress-I at the lower levels had participated in the riots.

The commission observed that the police on the whole did not behave properly and failed to act as a professional force. The government has generally accepted the recommendations of the commission and taken appropriate action. The commission recommended that an inquiry may be undertaken into the conduct of the police officers of Delhi. Therefore, a committee consisting of a former chief justice of the Delhi High Court, Justice Dalip K. Kapur, and a retired secretary to the Government of India, Miss Kusum Lata Mittal, has been constituted. It will submit its report within 6 months.

The commission also recommended the appointment of two officers to look into the offenses committed during the riots. To implement this, the government appointed a committee consisting of Justice M.L. Jain, a former judge of the Delhi High Court, and Mr E.N. Venison, a retired Indian Police Service officer. Following the commission's recommendations, the Delhi Police underwent a quantitative and qualitative expansion recently. The commission's recommendations regarding mass media have been brought to the notice of the members of the National Integration Council and will be discussed at the next meeting.

As far as incidents in Kanpur city and Bokaro were concerned, the commission blamed the local administration and police for delay in taking effective steps. The Justice Ranganath Mishra Commission of inquiry was set up in April 1985 to inquire into the violence in Delhi following the assassination of Mrs Indira Gandhi and to recommend measures for the prevention of such incidents.

SRI LANKA

Jayewardene To Visit Maldives 2-5 March

BK241547 Colombo Lanka Puwath in English 1409 GMT 24 Feb 87

[Text] Colombo, Feb 24 (LANKA PUWATH) — At the invitation of his excellency Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, president of the Republic of the Maldives, His Excellency J.R. Jayewardene, president of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and Mrs Jayewardene will make a state visit to the Republic of the Maldives from 2d to 5th March, 1987, states a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Colombo today.

Foreign Minister Summons Indian Envoy Over Speech

BK251136 Colombo International Service in English 1045 GMT 25 Feb 87

[Text] Sri Lanka yesterday expressed deep concern over a statement made by Indian President Zail Singh in the Indian parliament. Foreign Minister Shahul Hameed met the Indian high commissioner, J.N. Dixit, yesterday at the ministry and told him that Sri Lanka was deeply disappointed at the references made to Sri Lanka in the address of Mr Zail Singh.

According to a Foreign Ministry spokesman, Mr Hameed told the Indian high commissioner that Sri Lanka had always maintained that the good offices of the Indian Government in seeking a solution to the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka is of vital importance. In fact, it is one of the cardinal factors in Sri Lanka's approach to this problem. When references of this nature are made at the highest level, serious doubts could be raised in the minds of the international community about Sri Lanka's intention.

The minister also said that it is very difficult for Sri Lanka to understand the purpose of these references. They, in any case, do not have any constructive effect. What has India gained by giving Sri Lanka a beating or trying to tarnish its image? All lives are sacred whether they are the lives of the Sinhalese, Tamils, or Muslims. He said that the dispute in Sri Lanka has several parties and a resolution should satisfy all parties. The negotiator should command the confidence of all. Sri Lanka stands firmly committed to find a political solution and the president in his address to parliament has spelt out in clear terms Sri Lanka's response.

Soviet Delegate Says Relations 'Growing Stronger'

BK250941 Colombo LANKA PUWATH in English 0851 GMT 25 Feb 87

["OANA/POOL" item]

[Text] Colombo, Feb 25 (LANKA PUWATH) — Dr L.K. Shepetis, deputy to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, and leader of the Soviet delegation which arrived in Sri Lanka to participate in the 30th anniversary celebrations to mark the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two nations, at a press briefing of the information Department of the USSR Embassy in Colombo this morning said, that mutual understanding between the two countries are growing stronger day by day.

He said, the purpose of their visit to Sri Lanka is to strengthen the friendly relationship between the two nations.

He pointed out that the very existence of this movement of friendships was a good beginning and it has been fruitful as far as the interstate, economic and scientific relations between our countries are concerned.

"The two governments are much closer on important issues like disarmament, international peace and on the 'strategic defence initiative' " he added.

Answering a question Dr Shepetis said that the Soviet Union has taken every possible precaution to prevent any disasters like the one at Chernobyl in the future.

The vice president of the USSR-Sri Lanka Friendship Society addressing newsmen said "the Soviet Union is not supporting a military solution but a peaceful solution to Sri Lanka's ethnic problem".

Velayati Briefs Cabinet on Syrian Visit

LD251342 Tehran IRNA in English 1230 GMT 25 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 25 IRNA — Domestic and international developments and the recent various advances of Muslim Iranian combatants in the Karbala'-5 region were discussed at Wednesday's cabinet meeting.

Participating in the meeting were President 'Ali Khamene'i who chaired the session, Premier Hoseyn Musavi, as well as Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, just back from a one-day official visit to Syria.

Velayati briefed the cabinet on his just concluded visit to Syria. He told the ministers that the Iranian peace-plan has decreased the internal clashes in Lebanon and put an end to the siege of Palestinian camps.

The indefatigable efforts of the Iranian delegation as well as that of the ulema and Lebanese and Palestinian combatants were also commended for contributing to the success of the Islamic Republic peace plan.

The cabinet also discussed the ongoing building of bomb shelters with President Khamene'i emphasizing on the need for the government and people to expand their cooperation in the area.

Minister of Ershad Islami (Islamic Guidance) reported on the ministry's problems, including its activities on translation and publication of books.

Foreign Minister, IRGC Commander Visit Syria

For reportage of the visit to Syria by Foreign Minister Dr 'Ali Akbar Velayati and Mohsen Rafiqdust, minister of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, see the Syria section of the 24 February Middle East & Africa *Daily Report* and subsequent issues.

Majlis Speaker: Baghdad Can Be Deprived of Security

LD251727 Tehran IRNA in English 1656 GMT 25 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 25, IRNA — Majlis Speaker Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said here Wednesday that Iran is fully able to deprive the Iraqi capital city of Baghdad of security, and that there was no obstacle to it doing so.

Addressing the missile unit of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC) here, Rafsanjani said "The fact that we can put Baghdad under pressure and deprive it of security without any obstacle whenever we wish, is a heavy blow for the Iraqi regime."

"Of course, we have other weapons to retaliate Iraqi acts of mischief in the war of the cities, and it is important that Iraqi border cities such as Basra are within the range of our artillery fire," he added.

The Majlis speaker, who is also Imam Khomeyni's representative at the Supreme Defence Council (SDC), noted that Iran's success in equipping its missile unit at the minimum of costs, despite numerous difficulties, is not an easy task considering the missile power factor usually takes long years of hard and costly work to acquire. The Imam's representative at the SDC emphasized on the need for committed Iranian experts to continue their scientific research.

The Majlis speaker said that Iraqi air raids on Iranian cities were the direct result of the miscalculation of enemies of the Islamic revolution. He also lauded the personnel of the IRGC missile unit for their "valuable" efforts which, he said, demonstrate that any country who stands on its own feet can achieve any level of growth.

At present, enemies of the Islamic revolution are well aware that the Iraqi Army, which is supported and equipped by the East and West, is yet unable to cope with this newly-founded force (Iranian). Its only reaction has been to retreat before it, Rafsanjani said.

Majlis Deputy From Qom Interviewed on USSR Talks

PM251455 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 18 Feb 87 p 18

[*Keyhan* interview with Ayatollah Sadeq Khalkhali, Majlis deputy from Qom, who recently visited Moscow as part of the foreign minister's delegation; date and place not given]

[Text] Ayatollah Sadeq Khalkhali started the interview by saying: The visit was at the invitation of the Soviet foreign minister, who invited our foreign minister. Because of the obstacles that existed, the trip was postponed until last Thursday [12 February], when we left for that country.

He commented on the reasons why he went on the trip and said: Sometime ago Dr Velayati asked the Majlis Foreign Affairs Committee to send a representative along on this trip, so I went as representative of the Majlis.

Khalkhali then talked about the nature of the Iranian delegation and said: The delegation was headed by the respected foreign minister. In addition to myself, there were Messrs Larijani, Qaza'i, Ahmadi and Sarmadi.

Qom's deputy in the Majlis then talked about the welcome accorded by Soviet officials when the Iranian delegation arrived in Moscow. He said: When we arrived at the private airport the Soviet foreign minister welcomed us warmly along with other officials. There they explained our program of meetings and talks, and from there, instead of taking us to a hotel, they took us to a private palace called (Saveh Nikah) and looked after us very well.

The next morning at 0900 hours we started our first round of talks with the Soviet foreign minister, when lasted 1½ hours. During this meeting the Soviet foreign minister talked about good-neighborly relations and bilateral issues of interest and he told us: We have to safeguard our own interests when confronting the United States. We have to watch U.S. influence in the region.

The Soviet foreign minister told us: We understand you when you say in your slogans "no West" but we do not understand you

when you say "nor East." So we explained this to him and we told him that the meaning of this slogan is to reject any control by either the Eastern or Western blocs — it does not mean we do not want to have good-neighborly ties or contacts.

The Soviet foreign minister also brought up the issue of natural gas exports to the Soviet Union from Iran. He said: We invested a great deal in this project and we provided gas to a large portion of the population in the southern Soviet Union. But supplies were cut during the time of the first government after the revolution — the provisional government — and we lost a great deal.

So we told him that because we were producing less oil at that time, of course there was less natural gas. I personally believe that the then foreign minister Dr Yazdi should have explained the situation to them and he should have told them that the issue was not one of malice. In addition to this, if there was some question over the price of the gas, they should have brought this up and the gas should not have been cut off. In any case, it is not clear who was responsible or what policies were being followed when the gas flow was cut off.

This issue has not yet been made clear to us, but in any case because the people who used the natural gas were mostly Muslims and because they suffered when the flow was cut, the issue should be reconsidered. The matter is under review and has been raised with the oil minister, and some experts are preparing the ground so that we will able to sell them natural gas again.

In addition to this, during the meeting we had with the Soviet foreign minister, we told him that because of the role that we can play on the international arena, if problems and issues and complaints between us and the Soviet Union could be removed, it could be the start of many things. They accepted the fact that Iran carries a lot of weight in the world and they did not deny this.

The member of the Iranian delegation to Moscow added: In addition to the foreign minister, we also met with Andrey Gromyko, the Soviet president, and this was our longest meeting, lasting about 3 hours. Gromyko welcomed us warmly. One of the things we discussed with him — we also discussed it with the Soviet foriegn minister — was the issue of Afghanistan, which is a controversial subject.

Gromyko said Iran should help convince the Mujahidin to join in the national reconciliation. So we said: We did you enter Afghan territory? Gromyko said: The Afghan Government invited us 11 times to go there, so we did. Of course we objected to this reply and we said: Is it right for you to pour 120,000 soldiers into any country that invites you and to cause all these problems? Our imam advised you from the first day and told you that it was not proper for you to go to Afghanistan. Now you are bogged down there and cannot solve the issue.

Khalkhali added: We told them of course with regard to this question that there have to be negotiations between the parties that have vital interests in the issue. We stressed that Iran, the Soviet Union, Pakistan, and the Afghan mujahidin had to sit down and solve this problem. The question will be further discussed during the trip which the Soviet foreign minister will make to Iran in the future — Mr Velayati has invited his Soviet counterpart.

The Majlis deputy from Qom said: With regard to Afghanistan, just as you have common borders, so do we. In addition to this, the Afghans are the only people with whom we share not only borders and our religion, but also a common language, and we do not need translators.

We told them: You attacked Afghanistan at a time when we had many problems, and the fact that there were 2 million Muslim refugees was a conspiracy against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Of course we have given them all we can and we will continue to do so.

Gromyko told us: We want to leave Afghanistan, but a pro-U.S. government must not come to power there. So we told him that the United States will not come here.

Khalkhali added: We told Gromyko that Burhanuddin Rabbani, who is the leader of a big and influential group in Afghanistan, gave an interview to an Iranian newspaper on his way back from the United States and told the newspaper that his trip to the United States was a mistake that would not be repeated. He said this because they are faithful to Islam and the Koran, and the people of Afghanistan are fighting for Islam and the Koran. Because the governments that have come to power in Afghanistan reject Islam, the Afghan people do not allow this. We are behind the Afghan people and we want a regime in Afghanistan that stands on its own feet. The Soviet officials accepted this principle.

We told them that their action in Afghanistan and perhaps their move in Iraq have opened the door in the region for the United States. It opened a base in Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, started another base in Oman, and even gained some influence in some Arab countries. You must understand your position and you must not deal in this manner with the people of Iran and Iraq.

Gromyko told us: When the shah came to the Soviet Union we asked him what he wanted all those weapons for, and we knew that those arms were bought to confront us. So we replied: Your southern borders were under the control of the United States and from the southern coast of the Caspian Sea, from Sarakhs to Gorgan or Jolfa, it had listening posts. But we kicked them all out, which was to your benefit, and you cannot disregard this.

Ayatollah Khalkhali then talked about the imposed war of Iraq against Iran and said: We said to them very openly: Whether you help Saddam or not, he is a goner and we shall not quit the war. If you have any negotiations to do on the subject, go ahead and negotiate. We told them: We did not start the war. Why did you remain silent during the first 2 years of the war, when the Iraqis were in our country causing us all this damage?

We told them: During this time the Iraqis have fired 200 Soviet-made missiles at Dezful, have used chemical weapons, and have attacked ships, civilian aircraft, industrial and economic centers and other places, yet you have remained silent. They told us that at the United Nations they had said that the deployment of chemical weapons was not correct.

Gromyko told us: All world governments condemn this war. In reply we told him: The governments that condemn the war are either allied to you or to the United States. There are also countries that do not condemn the war. Those who are pressuring us to end the war are the same countries who were deadly silent at that time and who encouraged Iraq to undertake this attack.

In any case, our leadership, our people and the blood of our martyrs have made us determined to destroy Saddam. The more you help Saddam, the more our people will hate you; you must not to this. They said: We have not helped Iraq recently and we will not help them further. So we said: You made them what they are from the beginning and you unleashed them against us. Right now our towns are being attacked with your jet fighters. These issues cannot be overlooked.

Under these circumstances, when you do not share common borders with Iraq but have 2,500 km of common frontiers with us, why do you arm our enemy in this manner? Gromyko told us: One must show coolness. The Iranian leadership is a powerful one that is obeyed by the people and will not be satisfied if the people say "death to the Soviet Union" the way they say "death to America."

Gromyko added: The weapons that McFarlane gave you are like poisoned candy. We told them: We did not want this, they wanted to contact us, which shows our superior position. The United States is not a country to offer us arms when we are in a weak position. All these issues came up after our victory in Al-Faw.

Ayatollah Khalkhali concluded the interview by commenting on the results of the talks. He said: These talks were very successful and we reached some agreements in the military, economic, and other areas.

We agreed that the railroad between Sarakhs, Yazd and (Bafq) and the rail link between Moscow and Tehran should be pursued. With regard to dam construction, both sides agreed that some measures should be taken. There was also agreement on the return of Soviet technical staff to restart some of our important factories. There was also a decision to start Aeroflot flights to Iran.

The deputy from Qom added: These exchanges and talks, and the opening of doors of understanding between us and the Soviet Union are useful to both nations.

We do not look upon the Soviet Union in the same way as we regard the United States, and they know this as well. We regard the United States as the Great Satan and we think of the United States as the source of all problems for the oppressed peoples. We never want to consider the Soviet Union part and parcel of this issue.

Ayatollah Khalhali expressed the hope that the exchanges will increase. He said: The newspapers, radio, and television — now that we want to reach some sort of agreement — should do nothing to turn these trips into a disappointment or failure, whether out of ignorance or malice. For example, the night that we left, the television showed a film that was inappropriate for that time.

Of course, we must not forgo our thesis and our ideology, but we must view some things within the realms of international protocol and we must take into consideration all factors. We hope that the Soviet Union understands our position and we hope that it will not give all these weapons and ammunition to the Iraqis because this will cause problems in the future.

Ayatollah Khalkhali then advised the Soviet mass media not to have a hostile attitude and not to muddy the issue. He said: God willing, the positive results of these trips will become clear in the near future.

Bulgarian Official Discusses Ties With Velayati

LD221455 Tehran IRNA in English 1450 GMT 22 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 22, IRNA — Visiting Bulgarian deputy foreign minister for political affairs Aleksandur Strezov held talks with Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati on expansion of Tehran-Sofia relations, here Sunday. Among issues brought up at the meeting were Velayati's forthcoming visit to Bulgaria and exchange of visits by Iranian and Bulgarian officials.

Velayati expressed hope that Iran and Bulgaria would expand their cooperation in different fields.

The Bulgarian deputy foreign minister arrived here Sunday morning at the invitation of his Iranian counterpart Hoseyn Sheykh ol-Eslam. Upon his arrival, Strezov met with Sheykh ol-Eslam and discussed with him Tehran-Sofia relations, issues of the Middle East and the Persian Guld including the Iraqi-imposed war.

Meets With Mansuri

LD231313 Tehran IRNA in English 1240 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 23, IRNA — Visiting Bulgarian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Alexander Stradzov met with Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Cultural and Consular Affairs Mohammad Javad Mansuri Sunday.

In the meeting Stradzov expressed his country's willingness to expand relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mansuri informed the Bulgarian official of Iran's post-revolution cultural, educational and construction achievements.

Received by Agriculture Minister

LD231749 Tehran IRNA in English 1515 GMT 23 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 23, IRNA — Visiting Bulgarian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexandur Strezov in a meeting with Iranian Agriculture Minister 'Abbas 'Ali Zali here Monday held talks on the expansion of Tehran-Sofia relations.

Strezov said that the Bulgarian foreign trade minister would pay a visit to Tehran to participate in the upcoming session of the joint Iran-Bulgaria Economic Commission due to be held here early 1366, the Iranian calendar year begins on March 21.

The agriculture minister said in reply that frequent exchange of visits between by Iranian and Bulgarian officials would pave the way for boosting Tehran-Sofia cooperation.

Noting that necessary arrangements have been made to pave the way for implementing articles of an agreement signed by Iran and Bulgaria, Zali said that the two countries have made good progress in this regard. He also called for an increase of Iranian non-oil exports to Bulgaria and for implementation of quality control of over Bulgarian goods.

Zali also expressed satisfaction with Iran-Bulgaria cooperation in the fields of machine working, research, agrology and dam building, hoping that the current impediments on the way of Tehran-Sofia relations would be removed.

Reportage on Combat Operations in War With Iraq

Iraqi Positions Near Basra Hit

LD251323 Tehran IRNA in English 1300 GMT 25 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 25, IRNA — Iranian jet fighters in four separate missions heavily bombed Iraqi positions and troop concentration sites east of Basra on Wednesday, said a joint staff communique here.

The communique said that a large number of Iraqi soldiers were killed or wounded and vast parts of enemy positions set ablaze in the Iranian air raids. The fighters returned safely to bases after the bombing missions, the communique said.

Communique No 2,758

LD251633 Tehran IRNA in English 1609 GMT 25 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 25, IRNA — Iraqi positions and troops concentration sites east of Basra were heavily pounded by Iranian jet fighters at 06:35, 06:40, 06:55, 07:40, 09:41, 10:15 and 10:45 GMT Wednesday, sustaining casualities and losses. All planes returned safely to bases, said a military communique here on the same day.

Joint staff communique No. 2,758 said that Iranian helicopter gunships attacked enemy armoured units and motorized columns in the Sayyed region Tuesday, inflicting considerable casualties and losses on the Iraqi troops.

Exchange of artillery fire continued in all fronts Tuesday and Wednesday with Iranian Muslim Forces suppressing Iraqi activities and destroying enemy mine fields in the northwestern fronts, inflicting casualties and losses on the Iraqi soldiers.

In artillery exchanges, fire of Iranian combatants on Iraqi positions and strongholds in Ilam and Bakhtaran regions halted engineering activities of the enemy, and destroyed several Iraqi gun emplacements and two trucks. An Iraqi patrol unit was also forced to flee from Sumar operational region when it came under Iranian artillery fire.

Artillery fire of the Muslim forces halted movement of an Iraqi motorized column, and checked enemy relocation activities in Nei-Khazar region.

More than 15 Iraqi gun emplacements and a heavy machinegun were destroyed and a number of enemy soldiers were killed when Iraqi positions in southern fronts were subjected to artillery fire of the Islamic republic gendarmerie forces Tuesday and Wednesday, said the communique.

Umm Qasr Shelled 24-25 Feb

LD251752 Tehran IRNA in English 1721 GMT 25 Feb 87

[Text] Ahvaz, Khuzestan Prov., Feb. 25, IRNA — Military and economic centers of Iraq's Umm Qasr port were shelled by Artillery unit of the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC) over Tuesday and Wednesday. Command and logistic centers of Third and Seventh Iraqi Corps as well as naval bases in southern operational region sustained damage in the heavy shelling [words indistinct] Iraqi forces were killed.

Meanwhile, Muslim combatants of Iran inflicted damage on enemy forces in Val Fajr-8 operational theatre (Al-Faw) over the same period. Iraqi engineering activities and movement of logistical and armoured columns of the enemy forces were also halted.

Forces Advance in 'Blitz' Attack

LD260735 Tehran IRNA in English 0732 GMT 26 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb 26, IRNA — Muslim forces of Iran in a blitz attack on Iraqi troops in Karbala'-5 operational theater achieved outstanding victories Wednesday night. The operation aimed at strengthening Iran's defensive lines in the area.

The Khatem ol-Anbiya' joint army and Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps Headquarters in a statement said that in the Wednesday operation, the Muslim combatants passed through Iraqi barricades and fortifications in the operational area east of Basra. They advanced on the northern axis of Shalamcheh-Basra road, liberating more Iraqi territories.

During the operation, code-named 'Ya Zahra' (SA), the Iraqi enemy sustained heavy casualties and damage, the statement said, adding that Infantry Brigade 437 sustained 70 percent damage and many of its personnel were killed or injured. The statement said that Iraqi Infantry Brigade 98 has also been completely besieged by Iran's Muslim forces.

Iraqi Brigades Suffer Heavy Losses

LD260743 Tehran IRNA in English 0738 GMT 26 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 26, IRNA — The Iraqi Infantry Brigade 705 was totally smashed in Wednesday night operation of the Muslim forces of Iran launched east of Basra and north of the strategically important Shalamcheh-Basra road, according to latest reports from the Karbala'-5 operational region.

Iraqi Infantry Brigade 111 which had been reorganised and dispatched to the region after having suffered heavy human and material losses earlier, was also smashed by 80 percent.

More on Iraqis 'Annihilation'

LD260746 Tehran IRNA in English 0740 GMT 26 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 26, IRNA — The Iraqi Infantry Brigades 98 and 705 are at the verge of complete annihiliation, according to latest statement of the Khatem ol-Anbiya' Hqs. The two brigades posted in the area to encounter the Muslim forces of Iran are besieged by the Iranian troops, it added.

According to the statement in Wednesday night operations launched east of the Iraqi port city of Basra and north of the strategic Shalamcheh-Basra road, the Iraqi Brigade 437 was smashed by 70 percent.

2,000 Iraqis Killed

LD260748 Tehran IRNA in English 0745 GMT 26 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 26, IRNA — The number of Iraqi forces killed or wounded in Wednesday night operations is reported to be 2,000. Among the casualties are a number of Iraqi officers and NCOs.

The Muslim forces of Iran in a two-pronged thrust into enemy postions east of Basra and north of Shalamcheh-Basra road, have scored new victories.

Iraqi Counterattacks Crushed

LD260830 Tehran IRNA in English 0821 GMT 26 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 26, IRNA — Two Iraqi counterattacks in Karbala's operational theater were repelled by Muslim forces of Iran, Thursday morning. The Iraqi enemy, in a hasty move reorganized its defeated forces and launched two counterattacks against Iranian combatants, both of which were crushed. Iraqi troops inflicted heavy losses in the two counter-offensives.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi enemy deployed chemical weapons in the operational theater which was neutralised due to rainfall in the area and thanks to the vigilance of anti-chemical units. Muslim forces of Iran launched a two-pronged offensive east of Basra and north of Shalamcheh-Basra road, Wednesday night.

50 Iraqi Tanks Destroyed

LD260859 Tehran IRNA in English 0839 GMT 26 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb. 26, IRNA — Some 50 tanks and personnel carriers of the two Iraqi battalions of 'Khandaq and Entesar' [names as received] were destroyed in Wednesday night operations of the Muslim forces of Iran in Shalamcheh region. The personnel of the tanks were either killed or wounded. The anti-tank units of the Iranian troops advancing from two sides of the Shalamcheh-Basra road, liberated several more kms of Iraqi territory.

Meanwhile, the Iranian forces have seized large amount of enemy equipment intact, in overnight operations and also during the unsuccessful Iraqi counter-offensives Thursday morning.

Iraqi Brigade 98 'Smashed'

LD260900 Tehran IRNA In English 0843 GMT 26 Feb 87

[Text] Tehran, Feb 26, IRNA — The Iraqi infantry brigade 98 besieged since Wednesday night in north of Shalamcheh-Basra road, was totally smashed Thursday morning. A number of the personnel of the brigade were reported killed or wounded, scores of other captured with the others have [as received] fleeing the battle fields. Smoke of the burning Iraqi armaments is reported billowing skyward in the area.

Communique on Iraqi Losses, CW Use

LD261233 Tehran IRNA in English 1136 GMT 26 Feb 87

[Text] Khatem ol-Anbiya' HQ., Feb. 26, IRNA — Over 2,000 more Iraqi troops were killed or wounded when Iran's combatants of Islam destroyed two enemy brigades in the Karbala'-5 theatre Wednesday night, said Khatem ol-Anbiya' Joint Headquarters of the armed forces and the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps (IRGC) in its 27th statement released Thursday.

In the latest successful attack carried out by the Iranian Muslim forces, who advanced on the north of Basra-Shalamcheh route, Iraqi infantry brigades 98 and 705 were totaly smashed and enemy brigades 437 and 11, which had been reorganized and dispatched to the area, were 80 percent destroyed. Bodies of several Iraqi officers and noncommissioned officers were among those killed, while more than 50 tanks and personnel carriers were set ablaze and destroyed by the Iranian defenders.

Also, many Iraqi vehicles and engineering equipment were smashed, and several others were seized intact by the Muslim forces. Following their successful operations, the combatants of Islam severely smashed two enemy counterattacks in the area, inflicting heavier blows upon the Iraqi forces.

Simultaneous with its counteroffensives, the enemy also resorted to chemical weapons in the area which was immediately foiled by the complete readiness of the Iranian anti-chemical arms units and the rainfall in the region.

In the operations, which started at 21:00 hours local time (17:30 GMT) Wednesday and aimed at fortifying Iranian forces' positions in the Karbala'-5 theatre, several square kilometres of the operational region east of Basra was liberated by the Muslim defenders.

The Iranian troops, supported by the construction Jihad forces, are now strengthening their positions in the operational area, checking all enemy movements, concluded the joint communique.